

THE KENILWORTH-STREET SEWER.

It is due to Dr. Ure to state that he has issued a 'supplemental report,' in which he still maintains his point, and says that the evidence given on oath "by the two Government chemists, Mr. Richard Phillips and Dr. Playfair, of the Woods and Forests, and by the two chemists of King's and University Colleges, Dr. Miller and Mr. Campbell, may be regarded as one of the most marvellous scientific phenomena of this age of pretension, but which could not occur in any capital of Europe save our own." He adduces the experimental and testimonial evidence on which he rests his conviction that the sewer in question did contain cyanogen compounds, and that these compounds were derived from the gas lime; but he also points out the fact, that such compounds, or cyanogen itself, at least, may be variously formed, where carbon and nitrogen co-exist—as even from common coal and atmospheric air. There are thus two questions fairly at issue between these equally respectable authorities,—firstly, whether cyanogen did exist in the Kenilworth-street sewer; and, secondly, whether that cyanogen was derived from the gas lime, or from the heterogeneous mass of carbonaceous and other substances in the sewer itself. The reputation of one or other seems at stake.

Have you not (unintentionally, I am sure,) done me wrong in your leading article of last Saturday, wherein you protest against the tone taken by me in examining one of the witnesses at the late inquest on the accident in Kenilworth-street sewer? In the re-examination of the witness in question, I entertained a strong impression that he did not manifest that candour which every witness under similar circumstances ought to manifest. Your own remarks in the article in question show that you entertain a similar idea. I did press the witness closely and earnestly, but I think not more so than my duty required. The witness complaining that asperity of feeling was manifested towards him, I at once stated that if I had offended in that particular, I regretted it. I did not plead guilty to the charge; and I really think such a plea would not have been a proper one. Excuse me for thus taking up your time; but as your paper has (deservingly) a large and influential circulation, I am of course unwilling that any strictures on the part of its editor should remain unanswered.

JAMES HOPKINS.

King William-street, Strand, Oct. 31, 1849.

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

A GENERAL court was held on Friday, the 26th, at the Court House, Greek-street. Lord Ebrington in the chair.

The late Fatal Occurrence in the Sewer at Pimlico.—Sir John Burgoyne, after a few prefatory observations, alluded to the late fatal occurrence in the sewer at Pimlico, and said the subject had occupied the serious attention of the commissioners, who were collecting all the information to be obtained upon it. Having this object in view, and to guard against similar occurrences, he begged to move—

"That the surveyors be directed to report specially on the case of any sewer closed up at the end, and on any sewer in a more than usually noxious condition; and that they be held responsible for the necessary precautions before workmen enter sewers."

The motion being seconded, was unanimously adopted.

On the motion of Captain Dawson, seconded by Mr. Hardwick, it was agreed:—

"That the tide-table of the Thames prepared by the assistant-surveyor (Joseph Smith) be lithographed for the information of the commissioners."

That the tide observations of the Ordnance survey in June and July, 1849, Deptford, &c., be printed for the information of the commissioners."

Lord Ebrington thought it would be desirable that the present commissioners should have the benefit of the investigations of those gentlemen who had been on committees in the last and former commissions, and therefore moved "That the members of former or late commissions engaged on committees be requested to report the results of their respective investigations for the information of the commissioners."—The motion was agreed to.

It was next resolved, on the motion of Mr. Hawes, "That the tender of Messrs. Radley and Rogers for works in Webb-street, Southwark, be accepted.

(Phillips).—That the tender of Messrs. Williams for cleansing sewers at Hammersmith be accepted. (Lorick.)"

Lord Ebrington said, that he believed, from the importance attached by the public and the court to the late occurrence in Kenilworth-street, it would be expedient to procure a copy of the evidence taken before the coroner's jury on that occasion, and accordingly moved, "That the notes of the shorthand writers be procured for the use of the commissioners."—Agreed to.

Lord Ebrington next moved—"That such notes be referred to the general committee of the whole body of the commissioners, in report on the facts, and to give their opinion on the course to be taken thereon." Upon inquiry into the facts, he felt, most undoubtedly, that others than the Commissioners were to blame; but at the same time every opportunity would be afforded any persons implicated to give any explanation that they might see fit to the commissioners. He did not deem it prudent to say more upon the question until the commissioners had every information before them. Agreed to.

The Ventilation of Sewers by a Steam Jet.—Mr. Lawes said that it appeared that Mr. Goldsworthy Gurney's system of ventilating sewers by means of a steam jet, in the experiments at the Priar-street sewer, had been eminently successful; in consequence of which, he understood a letter had been sent by that gentleman to the commissioners. The letter having been read, it was resolved, that a letter be sent to Mr. Gurney, conveying the thanks of the commissioners to him for his services, and that he be informed that the commissioners are not at present in a situation to proceed further with the ventilation of sewers by means of his steam jet.

Upon the motion of Mr. Lawes, seconded by Mr. Rendel, it was agreed that the general committee be instructed to examine and arrange the business to be brought before the next court. By this means, it was said, the court would be fully in possession of the subjects which were to be brought under its notice, and any discussion which was necessary for the information of the public would take place in court.

The effect of this arrangement would seem to be, that the public will know simply just so much of what is going on as the commission like, and nothing more.

Miscellaneous.

APPEALS AGAINST RAILWAY RATES.—At the West Riding Michaelmas Sessions, reported by the *Bradford Observer* of last week, the Midland Railway Company appealed against an assessment at the rateable sum of 3,125*l.* on about 3 miles and 5-6ths of the Leeds and Bradford extension in the township of Bingley, station buildings, &c., inclusive. Some discussion arose as to the desire of the churchwardens and overseers to charge on prospective estimates in preference to actual receipts. The court ruled that actual receipts be taken as the criterion, and on these the rate was ordered to be made on 1,500*l.* in place of 3,125*l.* Appeal to Court of Queen's Bench refused. The sum offered by the Company exceeded that fixed by the court.—The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company then appealed against Heckmondwike highway rate, and the court reduced valuation from 160*l.* to 24*l.*, and rate from 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* to 1*l.* An appeal by same against Cleckheaton highway rate resulted in reduction of rate from 30*l.* to 3*l.* 18*s.* 2*d.* The Oakenshaw highway rate was also reduced. There were twenty-six appeals entered, but only six or seven tried.

BOILER EXPLOSION.—The whole of the north end of Liverpool was suddenly roused out of sleep into a state of great alarm on Saturday morning last, about one o'clock, by the explosion of a boiler, which, though only of four-horse power, destroyed a whole brewery, and injured fourteen cottages, blowing roofs out and crushing them in, knocking down walls and emptying vats and a reservoir, the latter of which it turned right over, and emptied a great quantity of water among the fallen timbers, which it is supposed to have thus prevented from being altogether consumed by fire. No life was lost, though three persons were buried in the brewery ruins and whole families under the cottage roofs; so that—unfortunately, shall we say—this is not a case likely to go far towards the establishment of that end for which we have so long contended, namely, the authorized and general regulation and inspection of steam boilers, and the great saving of life and property thereby.

GOODRICH COURT, ON THE WYE.—We hear that the interior of this "romance in stone and lime," the residence and museum of the late Sir Samuel Meyrick, is undergoing considerable alteration. A banqueting-room is to replace a portion of the galleries. The *Gloucestershire Chronicle* mentions that the latter have been stripped of their rare and valuable contents to a great extent, and that much of the armour is deposited in a stable! Can this be so? Goodrich Court is national in its character, and we sincerely hope that its present owner will preserve the valuable and almost unique assemblage of antiquities within its walls, intact.

ROMAN CIRENCESTER.—We are glad to learn that Messrs. Buckman and C. H. Newmarch are preparing for publication "Illustrations of the Remains of Roman Art in Cirencester, the Site of Ancient Corinium." Corinium-caester was so important a station during the occupation of Britain by the Romans, that it is not surprising many memorials of a people so advanced in the arts of civilization should, from time to time, be found upon its site, of value in enabling the antiquary to arrive at important conclusions concerning the history of a people whose protracted residence in our island has ever since exerted great influence even upon the manners and customs of the present inhabitants.

WINDOW GARDENS.—Those who are debarred from the enjoyment of a garden by sickness, residence, or fortune, should take a leaf out of the book of the French and Belgian ladies, who succeed, by means of double glazed windows and other contrivances, in providing themselves with an ample supply of fresh flowers at all seasons of the year. "In Belgium," says M. Victor Paquet, "wherever you go, you see spaces between double sashed windows filled in winter time with the most charming flowers. Elsewhere, the balconies are turned into greenhouses, and you may find on a fifth or sixth floor a miniature stove, gay with the brightest flowers and the greenest foliage."

INDUSTRIAL ART.—In viewing the engravings contained in the *Art-Journal*, of works in the Birmingham exhibition of manufactures and arts, I was astonished to find that in nearly all articles designed for domestic utility, there was a prodigious display of the floral character to be executed as like unto nature as the various metals would by their nature permit. Now in the designs for curtain bands, cornices, cornice pole ends, their character is peculiarly inapplicable for their purposes. The end of a round brass pole, with its jingling rings, seems to me to be rather an *outré* place, acting in its horizontal position, for the springing out of flowers, such as the tulip or convolvulus; they certainly are most capably adapted for places of refuge for spiders to set their snares for the unwary flies, or for the deposit of dirt and dust. As to the bands, I am sure they will contribute largely to the hourly occupation of the neat domestic wife, in repairing the rents produced in the muslin, &c. (both curtains and gowns), by the elegant sharp pointed leaves, let her even have that *rara avis*, a careful and thoughtful servant. The next subject is the stove and fender ends (Messrs. Hoole's). The stove is a clever puzzle to those who want to stir the fire, but a far greater puzzle it is to the cleanly domestic, who has daily to run the risk of scarifying her knuckles and elbows in cleaning the grate, and how she is to take away the dust and ashes is to me a wonder. The terminations have the same danger and difficulty attending them, but it will put the inventive genius and patience of the mistress to a severe trial, when she attempts to sweep her fender clean. The same want of necessary thought prevails in all the articles designed for domestic purposes. How much wiser and advanced were our forefathers in such matters, when they produced simple and elegant forms, introducing only now and then ornament to give them a character or a pleasing quaintness. Far better would the time of the artists be spent if they would study a little more the practical use to which their works are intended to serve.

"Use with elegance combined
Denote the cultivated mind."

C. E. M.